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Summary record of the 28th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 31 March 2017, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

Contents

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (*continued*)

Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Programme budget implications relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Agenda item 140: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*)

Agenda item 148: Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (*continued*)

Agenda item 133: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed seventy-first session of the General Assembly

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (*continued*)

Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/C.5/71/L.27)

Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.27: Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

1. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, in section VII of the draft resolution, paragraph 7, line two, the total amount should read "2,801,400 dollars." In section VII, paragraph 8, line five, the amount should read "961,900 dollars."

2. *Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.27, as orally amended, was adopted.*

Programme budget implications relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/C.5/71/L.26)

Draft decision A/C.5/71/L.26: Programme budget implications relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

3. *Draft decision A/C.5/71/L.26 was adopted.*

Agenda item 140: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*) (A/C.5/71/L.25)

Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.25: Joint Inspection Unit

4. *Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.25 was adopted.*

Agenda item 148: Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (*continued*) (A/C.5/71/L.23)

Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.23: Construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch

5. *Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.23 was adopted.*

Agenda item 133: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/C.5/71/L.24 and A/C.5/71/L.28)

Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.24: Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat

6. *Draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.24 was adopted.*

Draft decision A/C.5/71/L.28: Questions deferred for future consideration

7. *Draft decision A/C.5/71/L.28 was adopted.*

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed seventy-first session of the General Assembly

8. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed her gratitude to the Committee for working tirelessly and constructively to complete its programme of work within the time frame allotted. She trusted that all delegations would work to ensure that the late evenings and early mornings that had characterized the informal consultations at the first part of the resumed seventy-first session did not become typical of the Committee's working methods.

9. She noted with appreciation the consensus reached on all agenda items at the current session and welcomed the spirit of openness and transparency that had characterized the deliberations.

10. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, noted with appreciation that the Committee had completed its work within the time allotted, despite the hectic final stretch of informal consultations. He welcomed the flexibility shown by delegations, even though the strategies adopted had sometimes required the Group to reframe its positions.

11. The Committee had discussed a number of issues of particular importance to the Group. With respect to the lessons learned from the coordination activities of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), the Group had noted difficulties relating to the fundamental role of the Mission's leadership, as well as the importance of coordination, partnerships, and operational impact and delivery. While recognizing the catalytic role of UNMEER in mobilizing the human and financial resources needed to scale up the response and facilitating the exchange of information among responders from the global to the field levels, the Group had noted challenges relating to harmonization, coordination and overlap between the activities of the Mission and those of other specialized organizations. To avoid potential future health crises, the Group had underscored the importance of improving and adapting existing coordination mechanisms and supporting national and local institutions, with a view to strengthening engagement with actors already on the ground, the African Union, and the affected countries. In that regard, the Group looked forward to the next report of the Board of Auditors on the financial statements of

UNMEER, as well as information on the establishment of standing administrative measures for start-up and crisis situations that would take effect upon confirmation of a crisis or emergency.

12. The Group had also noted the satisfactory completion of the new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch. In particular, it appreciated that the project had incorporated local resources and knowledge and had been designed in line with best practices for sustainable building, with a view to minimizing consumption of energy, water and other resources and reducing long-term operating costs and greenhouse gas emissions. He thanked the Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania for the contributions that they had provided to the project at no cost to the Organization. In addition to donating land for the Arusha premises, the Government had completed the final electrical utility connection and the Internet and telecommunications connection, and had constructed a temporary access route to the complex, with connection to the water and electricity systems. Such contributions should be emulated in the interest of reducing costs to the Organization.

13. The Group welcomed the compromise reached on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat. The necessary elements were in place for preventing and combating fraud; implementing results-based management and institutional risk management; evaluating programmes; and strengthening the definition of responsibilities of senior managers, including the delegation of authority for procurement. The Group also attached high importance to the policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse and looked forward to the discussions on that issue at the second part of the resumed session.

14. The Committee had reached agreement on the elements of the United Nations information and communications technology policy and on the allocation of necessary resources for the implementation of the draft resolution A/71/L.58 on modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. With respect to the questions deferred for future consideration, the Group hoped that a lasting solution would be found with regard to the proposed United Nations Secretariat contribution to the United Nations Development Group cost-sharing arrangement for the resident coordinator system, following the submission by the Secretary-General of a refined proposal on the arrangement and on management of the financing thereof at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

15. With regard to the standards of accommodation for air travel, the Group had not been provided with sufficient information to determine the appropriateness of increasing the travel time needed for United Nations personnel to qualify for business class beyond the number of hours stipulated in the Secretary-General's administrative instruction on official travel (ST/AI/2013/3) and endorsed in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. The Group would not agree to any solution that did not apply to all personnel in an equitable, uniform and transparent manner, taking into account the length of the journey and medical condition of the traveller as determined on the basis of a physician evaluation. While cost-saving efforts should be made to the extent possible, they should never result in discrimination.

16. The Group regretted the Committee's late consideration of the issue of procurement activities and hoped that the next report of the Secretary-General on that topic would include information on, inter alia, the participation of bidders from countries and subregions that hosted peacekeeping operations and special political missions; delegation of procurement authority; companies with subsidiaries registered in developing countries; the concept of sustainable procurement; efforts to ensure that bids were published in the official languages of countries hosting field missions; capacity-building initiatives; and the promotion of equal opportunities for vendors from developing countries.

17. In the interest of consensus-based decision making, delegations must avoid politicizing the administrative, financial and budgetary matters before the Committee. The experience of the current session had once again demonstrated that improving the Committee's working methods entailed adjusting approaches to negotiation. When Member States worked in a spirit of mutual respect and transparency, the Group of African States stood ready to take into account the concerns of all delegations.

18. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union) noted with appreciation the timely issuance of documentation for the first part of the resumed session, while underscoring the need for a collective commitment to improving the Committee's working methods. The status of preparedness of documentation should continue to be monitored as preparations for the second part of the resumed session began, particularly given the anticipated heavy workload and the Committee's history of exceeding the time frame allotted for its deliberations.

19. His delegation welcomed the consensus reached on, inter alia, the programme budget implications of the draft resolution on the modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, the information and communications technology strategy and the draft resolution on the Joint Inspection Unit. It also noted with appreciation the constructive deliberations and timely conclusion of the lessons learned exercise on the activities of UNMEER, as well as the progress made to develop the accountability framework of the Secretariat. In that regard, the European Union welcomed the Secretary-General's emphasis on the centrality of accountability and transparency to all of the Organization's policies and activities, including in the area of management.

20. He noted with concern that the approved additional resource requirements for the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea barely met the staffing requirements of the Panel and recalled that ensuring timely and adequate financing of special political missions was a core function of the Committee. In that regard, the European Union recognized the political importance of the approval of the resource requirements for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

21. Particularly in the light of the adoption of the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, it was regrettable that the Secretariat was the only member of the United Nations Development Group that did not contribute its agreed share of the financing for the resident coordinator system, a situation that reflected poorly on the seriousness of the Fifth Committee and could affect the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the country level. His delegation therefore looked forward to considering the item again at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

22. It was regrettable that the Committee had been unable to reach agreement on the standards of accommodation for air travel. The insistence of some delegations on first class travel entitlements for particular groups and resistance to more judicious use of business class were at odds with the commitment to promoting a more modern, efficient and accountable United Nations. His delegation would welcome robust proposals from the Secretary-General in that regard and encouraged him to reconsider the use of first class travel by United Nations staff. Lastly, the Secretariat should promote a greater understanding of the benefits of sustainable procurement practices in the context of the United Nations.

23. **Mr. Fu** Daopeng (China) said that the Committee had reached consensus, in a spirit of cooperation, on accountability, information and communications technology, special political missions and the Joint Inspection Unit. Sound financial management was essential to United Nations governance, and the Member States were seeking ways of improving financial efficiency, which fell under the Committee's mandate. China would join other Member States in strengthening cooperation in the Committee's work.

24. **Ms. Connelly** (United States of America) said that, with regard to accountability, her delegation would seek further information regarding the efforts of the Organization in results-based management. While the revised whistle-blower protection policy was welcome, the Secretary-General must establish a culture of protection for those who reported misconduct. Although the Committee had approved resources for implementation of the mandates of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1874 (2009), it had failed to take decisions on procurement, the contingency fund, the resident coordinator system and standards of accommodation for air travel. At the second part of the resumed session, her delegation would pay close attention to peacekeeping, examine opportunities to cut costs and promote a consensus-based approach.

25. **Mr. Imada** (Japan) said that the Committee should give adequate consideration to peacekeeping, with a view to effective resource use.

26. **Mr. Burity** (Angola) said that the Committee's discussions must be inclusive and decisions must be taken by consensus. Adherence to high ethical standards and mutual respect would prevent the use of tactics that could adversely affect negotiations.

27. **Mr. Khalizov** (Russian Federation) said that, despite the comparatively small number of matters before the Committee, the deliberations at the first part of the resumed session had been complicated and delegations had been unable to reach agreement on some of the items under consideration. Because no decision had been taken on procurement, the General Assembly had no mandate to implement any new reforms in that area. His delegation stood ready to reconsider such reforms at the first part of the resumed seventy-third session.

28. **Mr. García Landa** (Mexico) said that the Committee had assumed its responsibility for ensuring financial resources for many important mandates, in particular those set out in the draft resolution on

modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

29. **The Chair** said that the Fifth Committee had completed its work at the first part of the resumed seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.